

Remarks at the Business Enterprise Awards Luncheon in New York City
February 18, 1997

Thank you very much, Jim and Norman and to all of you who are involved in the Business Enterprise Trust. Our host, the New York Public Library, thank you for this magnificent room. And to; especially to our awardees.

I'm glad Bill Moyers told that story about Calvin Coolidge and Alice Roosevelt Longworth because I was looking at these—I had a great time today. I sort of hate it that I have to speak; I was having such a good time looking at the films and looking at the people. But I was thinking to myself, why am I here, because this is such an interesting program; what do they need me here for? And then I thought, well, Norman Lear has been trying to get me to come here for 4 years. *[Laughter]* He's hard to say no to. Every person's friendship carries a certain burden; you know that. That's it. *[Laughter]* And as Calvin Coolidge said, "A man's got to eat." *[Laughter]* So, Norman, I want to thank you for that stick of bread and the cookie at lunch. It was great. *[Laughter]*

Ladies and gentlemen, Norman Lear told that old story about his grandfather—in 1981, I had the distinction of entering my name for the first time in Ripley's when I became the youngest former Governor in the history of the American Republic. *[Laughter]* With dim career prospects and in my entire State only one person offered me a job; Norman Lear called me and asked me if I would consider coming to work in another one of his endeavors. And I never forgot it, mostly because no one else wanted me to come to work at anything. *[Laughter]* And we've been friends ever since. He doesn't have to do this. He does it because he believes in it and he loves it and he believes that all of us have a higher purpose in our endeavors.

I have known Jim Burke for a long time. In his former life, he headed a great company with two plants in my State that were the embodiment of a lot of what you recognize here every year. And since then, he has headed the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. I don't think any American citizen could wish to have a person in charge of the endeavor

to make our country drug-free who is deeper, more committed, more passionate, more whole-hearted than Jim Burke. America owes him an enormous debt of gratitude for his efforts there.

I was thinking about what all this meant today in terms of what I actually need to talk to you about as President. What is Marriott's effort to provide real services to many of their employees, including a lot of them whose first language is not English and who weren't born here? What does that mean for what I have to say? What does Motorola's commitment to lifetime education and training for its employees, something we do in the military, I might add, but something which Motorola does at an investment of 3 times the industry average? What does that mean? What does the incredible story of Olmec Toys mean? If I ever need anything sold, I'm calling you. *[Laughter]* I've now run all my elections—where were you when I needed you? *[Laughter]* What does it mean for children to be able to see in their toys their dreams, and imagine that there is a connection between their small lives and their big dreams?

I don't know how many of you read Max DePree's books, but I have, and when I read "Leadership Is An Art" I was overwhelmed. I said to myself, why in the living daylights didn't I know that already? Why haven't I been doing that? Why would anybody ever try to do it any other way? What does all this mean?

What I think it means is not only that it's possible to be a good business person and a good citizen, that it's possible to do things like grow the economy and preserve the environment, that you can make a profit and still be decent to your employees, that you can be efficient and still recognize the dignity and the importance of the larger society of which you're a part—that's all true—but I think what it really means is that the most fulfilled people in life are those whose lives are most whole and most in harmony with others with whom they live and come in contact and work and that in a funny way we're all trying, in different ways, to end the isolation of our endeavors and find some real integrity, some wholeness to them, to connect ourselves to each other in a way that enables

us to flourish as individuals and to find personal success by making the whole stronger and better.

And that brings me to what I actually need to talk to you about today, which is how we're going to do that for those among us who are the poorest Americans, who are on welfare and who are now the object of the welfare reform law which I signed last year, because they, too, deserve that. And in some ways, those who have become permanently dependent on public assistance have been isolated from the rest of us by people whose political views span the entire spectrum.

I hear people who think of themselves as conservative, demeaning people on welfare sometimes by saying, "Well, none of them want to go to work," and you know, "The only answer to that is just to walk away. They won't do anything unless they're faced with starvation." And then I hear people who are more liberal demeaning them in a way that can be equally deadening, by saying, "Well, the poor things, they can't work, and so we have to just take care of them. Of course, we'll take care of them at a substandard level, so that every month, from now to the rest of their lives, they'll always be acutely conscious of what they cannot do and cannot be and cannot become."

I believe that we never intended to create a class of permanently dependent people in our society. I believe it only happened because the welfare system we set up for people who had genuine misfortune—the typical welfare recipient 60 years ago was a West Virginia miner's widow, with no education and no expectation of being in the work force and children running around the house that had to be cared for and a society that did not require high levels of education for success.

Today, basically, there are two groups of people on welfare. Half the people in this system or any other system would work just fine for it because they run into a little trouble and then they need a little help. But they get themselves out of it, and they go right on about their business and don't get back on welfare again. And they do just fine. And this system—it's not very good, but it's about as good as anything else because they made it work and they go on with their lives.

Then there are the rest of the people on welfare, slightly more than half, who essentially have become part of a group of people in America known in a kind of pejorative sense often as a permanent under class, mostly younger women and their young children with little or no education, little or no job experience, little or no ability to move into the work force on a sustained basis.

There are another group of people, by the way, that have not been part of this public debate at all, who are at least as big a social concern to me, and those are the single men who are ineligible to get welfare payments in almost every State because they're single men, they don't have children they're supporting, and they live on food stamps and whatever else they can scrounge up. But they're hardly ever in the work force, and we have paid for that as well. The isolation of these people from the rest of us has cost them in ways that are obvious, but we have paid as well—all the families that haven't been formed, all the jobs and all the economic activity that hasn't been there.

So for 4 years, we've been working on this because I believe we could do better. And in 4 years, we've had the biggest reduction in welfare rolls in history, 2¼ million. But it happened for several reasons. It happened about half because we had 11½ million jobs in the last 4 years, and that had never happened before. It happened about 30 percent because over 40 States were already working on welfare reform, moving people from welfare to work. And we don't really know why the other 20 percent got off welfare, partly because we had a 50 percent increase in child support collections.

But now we have a law that says every State must design a system to move able-bodied people who are adults from welfare to work in 2 years. That's what the law says. And I won't bore you with all the details, but let me give you the bottom line. The bottom line is that in the next 4 years, with a smaller welfare population and people who are therefore harder to place, we have to move as many people into the work force as we did in the last 4 years when we had 11½ million jobs and a 50 percent increase in child support enforcement and 43 States already out there working on welfare reform.

And you have to help. And you have to find a way to make it good business. And I believe you can. And that's what I came here to say. We cannot be the country we ought to be if 20 percent of our children are living in poverty. We cannot be the country we ought to be if we say there are all these folks out here that literally we're prepared to have physically separate from us. And if any of you have ever really spent any time with folks on welfare, you know that most of them are actually dying to go to work. And a painful number literally don't know the first thing about how. And we have a lot of work to do.

But what I want to say to you is this is not an insurmountable problem. Let me just give you a couple of numbers. Keep in mind I said in order to meet the requirements of the law, which I have carefully reviewed now, we'll have to move about a million people more into the work force. That will reduce the welfare rolls by about 2.7 million because of the size of welfare families.

Now, how in the wide world are we going to do this? Well, the first thing you need to know is that there are about 826,000 businesses in America with more than 20 employees. There are 1.1 million nonprofit organizations in America—I don't have the employment breakdown on them. There are 135,000 houses of worship in America with 200 or more members, and over 200,000 with 100 or more members.

Under the new law, every State in the country can take what used to be the welfare check and actually just go give it to an employer to train—properly train—not have some momentary, fly-by-night, meaningless education program but to actually properly train the employee and to pay a wage subsidy to help train people on literally the habits of work. There is not excuse not to do that. If the law passes that I have proposed, we'll also have a 50 percent tax credit of up to \$10,000 for doing it.

Every State can, for single men who don't get welfare checks, can give food stamp funds to the employer for the same purpose. The tax credits are no good to the houses of worship and the community nonprofits who don't pay taxes, but the cash subsidies would be. There are all kinds of things that can be

done. But if you just look at the sheer numbers of employers out there, we could do this million people in a snap and help to break the back of the isolated under class in America and make poverty what it used to be, at least in our imagination, which is a way-station on the way to the middle class for people who would work and learn.

Over the weekend, Charlene Barshefsky, our Trade Ambassador, concluded an agreement on telecommunications that industry leaders estimate will bring one million new jobs to America—that one agreement—in the next 10 years. But none of them will go to people who are illiterate. None of them will go to people who can't find their way on a bus or a subway to work. None of them will go to people who literally don't have the self-confidence to be able to look people dead in the eye and talk to them and relate to them.

This country will never be what it ought to be if there are people who are literally beyond the message of Max DePree or Motorola or Olmec Toys or all these other things. We have got to realize, especially because so many of them are children, that they are our responsibility, too.

And so I ask you today, whether you belong in the category of folks who've criticized the welfare system without really knowing anybody on welfare or whether you belong in a category of folks who patronize people on welfare and therefore undersold what they could become or whether, like most of us, you've probably done a little bit of both in your life, they are our people. They are a big part of our future.

The law now says that those who can work have to work. And now that we as a nation have put that requirement on them, we have to make sure that those who have to work can work. It is our highest responsibility. But we should do it not with any spirit other than a desire to further what we saw in every one of these films today and to make sure every American can be a part of the whole. And if that happens, they will be better, but so will we.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. at the New York Public Library. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Burke, chairman, and Norman Lear,

founder, Business Enterprise Trust; and journalist Bill Moyers.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting the Second Africa
Trade and Development Report**
February 18, 1997

Dear _____:

I am pleased to submit the second of five annual reports on the Administration's Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa as required by section 134 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act. Our policy seeks to accelerate the pace of sustainable economic development for the countries of Africa.

This Second Africa Trade and Development Report reflects our conviction that economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa will benefit both Africans and Americans. Stronger economies will better enable African nations to address a variety of complex problems that transcend regional boundaries. In an increasingly competitive global economy, the United States cannot afford to neglect a vast region that contains almost 10 percent of the world's population. Our efforts to help Africa develop will also create more export opportunities for U.S. goods and services and more jobs at home. These efforts to strengthen African economies will also reduce the cost in later years for large-scale U.S. humanitarian aid and enhance local and regional capacity to address transnational problems that threaten regional stability.

Many African countries have made significant progress in the struggle for development in recent years. With assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, more than 30 Sub-Saharan African nations have instituted economic reform programs, and, since 1990, nearly as many have held elections.

Nevertheless, there is much more to be done. The United States and other developed nations must do our part to promote economic growth and development in the region. Additionally, African governments must recognize that the failure of many to open their markets to increased international trade has inhibited regional economic growth.

This second report summarizes the status of ongoing programs discussed in last year's African trade and development report and introduces several initiatives designed to spur investment, development, and trade over the near to medium term. These programs and initiatives seek to achieve five basic objectives set forth in the first report: trade liberalization and promotion, investment liberalization and promotion, development of the private sector, infrastructure enhancement, and economic and democratic reforms implemented by many Sub-Saharan African governments in recent years.

Working with the Congress, the U.S. private sector, the countries of Africa, and our other trading partners, the Administration looks forward to developing additional initiatives to promote trade, investment, and development in Africa.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; William V. Roth, Jr., chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and Bill Archer, chairman, and Charles B. Rangel, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means.

**Remarks at a Democratic Senate
Campaign Committee Dinner in
New York City**

February 18, 1997

Thank you very much. First, let me thank Shelby and Katherine for taking us in tonight. I don't want to be adopted, but this makes the White House look like public housing. [Laughter] It is wonderful public housing. [Laughter] I really do appreciate they're taking us in, and I thank all of you for coming.

And I thank Senator Leahy, Senator Biden, as well as Senators Kerrey and Torricelli. I thank you, Congressman Rangel, for being here. And I don't think—Senator Moynihan is not here anymore; he was here earlier.